DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 208 854 IR 009 763

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TITLE Distinctive Functions of School Media Centers and Public Libraries, 2nd edition; A Yardstick for Planning School Library Media Centers, 3rd edition.
INSTITUTION Iowa State Dept. of Public Instruction, Des Moines.
PUB DATE 81
NOTE 17p.; For related document, see ED 153 661.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Facility Planning; Guidelines; *Learning Resources Centers; *Library Cooperation; *Library Role; *Library Services; *Public Libraries; School Libraries; State Departments of Education; State Libraries
IDENTIFIERS Iowa

ABSTRACT

The functions, roles and responsibilities, and services of school media centers and public libraries at the local and state levels are discussed, as are the supportive functions and services provided by the State Library Commission of Iowa and the Department of Public Instruction. An extensive list of recommendations outlines the part that cooperation can play among all of the agencies cited, and provides guidelines for pursuing cooperative efforts. A 26-item bibliography lists current studies on the library role and cooperative service efforts. A brief brochure providing guidelines for facility planning is attached.
(Author/MER)

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DISTINCTIVE FUNCTIONS

OF

SCHOOL MEDIA CENTERS AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Revised by

Betty Jo Buckingham

Barry L. Porter

2nd edition

Revised from
Distinctive Functions of School and Public Libraries
1966
Distinctive Functions of School Media Centers and Public Libraries
1978

STATE OF IOWA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
STATE LIBRARY COMMISSION OF IOWA
1981

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4200-D70421-1/81

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DISTINCTIVE FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOL MEDIA CENTERS AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Prepared by

THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

AND

THE STATE LIBRARY COMMISSION OF IOWA

The public library's mission is to extend its services to all people. The school media center is a unique instructional agency - a special library - designed for children and young people engaged in a learning program and for the staff that administers that program. School and public libraries traditionally have accepted the principle of cooperation with each other and other libraries. The value of such cooperation and the need for networking is receiving increased attention but networking, too, is a principal with a history. In fact the 1956 American Library Association publication, Public Library Service, A Guide to Evaluation with Minimum Standards stated that:

"Public libraries and school libraries are part of a network of library facilities, and should work together to provide coordinated and complete service for children and young people." (p. 23.)

I. FUNCTIONS

A. FUNCTIONS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

1. School Media Center

The school media center is a service center designed for use of elementary, middle school, junior high and senior high students, teachers and administrators regardless of sex, ethnic group or handicap. Its distinctive function is its instructional role. It supports the curriculum and meets educational needs by providing a rich variety of materials, equipment and services. It is sometimes called an instructional materials center both because students learn library or media center skills and because they can read, view, and listen for knowledge and enjoyment, choosing from a variety of media. It is also frequently called library, or library media center. Instruction, formal or informal, enables the librarian or media specialist and teachers to teach students to use material with discrimination, judgment and appreciation.

There are two major emphases in the school media center. There is the opportunity to furnish the intellectual atmosphere and the materials to help students develop an appreciation of good books and good audiovisual programming, and an ability to read, listen and view critically. Curricular and independent study needs are met by a variety of books, periodicals, pamphlets, reference, and audiovisual materials accessible to students and teachers throughout the school day. The materials collection is designed to satisfy the demands of individual or classroom projects.

Teachers use the school media center as a resource, preparation and planning center. Teachers and administrators consult with the librarian or media specialist on evaluation, selection and utilization of materials and equipment, but the final responsibility for selection and evaluation is that of the media specialist or librarian. School library media specialists participate with teachers in curriculum development and text materials selection and provide instructional materials production support for the curriculum.

Provision for excellent school media services is basically the responsibility of the local school board which delegates authority for administration of this program to its superintendent. The superintendent and the library or media supervisor and/or the library media specialists, work together to plan budget, quarters and equipment purchases.

2. PUBLIC LIBRARY

The public library is designed to serve the reading and informational needs of people of all ages in its service area including the handicapped. Its collection and services provide access to the working, educational, recreational, and leisure time information needs of the entire community. Public libraries have both print and audiovisual materials for easy circulation. It is the community's major center for reliable information for a clientele ranging from pre-school to senior citizens.

Citizen use of the public library requires that it have distinct physical characteristics. It should be located near major traffic arteries and have adequate public parking. Library programs should be accessible for the physically handicapped and in a location that entices the user to come into the informal atmosphere of the public library.

The use of the public library is voluntary and services and materials for all users are planned to satisfy their individual interests.

FUNCTIONS AT THE STATE LEVEL

1. STATE LIBRARY COMMISSION OF IOWA

The State Library aids and encourages public libraries through the development of regional networks to provide more efficient and effective utilization of resources. The consultant staff is available to assist public libraries by means of consultant visits, workshops, institutes, conferences, and evaluations. The Library is responsible for developing standards for the improvement of public library service.

The State Library provides additional supportive library services for all types of libraries. The State Library coordinates the Iowa Library Information Teletype Exchange (I-LITE) which provides interlibrary loan access for all citizens of Iowa. Included in the network are public, college, university and special libraries. The State Library's collection of books, periodicals, and records are

available to patrons through public libraries. The state film collection is accessible to patrons through local public libraries. The State Library encourages the development of all types of library services throughout the state.

The Regional Library System was developed to provide suportive services to the public libraries. Reference services, interlibrary loan, consultant visits, workshops, professional collections are some of the services identified and provided by the regional system.

2. DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

The Department of Public Instruction provides services to strengthen and stimulate the development of school media services, Area Education Agency Media Centers (AEAMC) and Area School (Community College) learning resource centers.

It develops administrative rules and standards or guidelines for local district and Area Education Agency and Community College media services. Consultant staff is available for field visits, conferences, inservice training and program evaluations at the preschool, elementary, secondary and community college levels and to AEAs, to higher education institutions training teachers, school librarians, instructional technologists and media specialists. The Department establishes certification rules for school librarians or school media specialists and interprets the legal requirements for school library media centers.

The Iowa Network for Obtaining Resource Materials for Schools (INFORMS), which is based in the Department, provides computer-assisted bibliographic reference service for school teachers and administrators. Area Education Agency Media Center (AEAMC) personnel serve as liaison or negotiators between the local schools and the INFORMS program.

The Area Education Agency Media Centers were developed to provide supplemental collection, audiovisual production and printing services to both students and staff in local schools and districts. They also provide media related consultative services in their own areas. The Department of Public Instruction has the responsibility for program oversight for these services. The Department has encouraged and supported the development of the Cooperative Network of Inservice Resources (CNIR), a collection of inservice materials, basically audiovisual, which is funded by the Area Education Agencies and the State Department of Public Instruction, to serve school educators throughout the state.

None of the services of the Department, the AEAMC's, the public library or the Regional Public Library System should be construed as a substitute for a media center at the local school or building level.

3. COOPERATION

The State Library Commission of Iowa and the Department of Public Instruction cooperate whenever possible to encourage the development of excellent library service for all Iowans.

The Department and the State Library Commission cooperate in providing workshops and other inservice opportunities for all librarians and media specialists to keep them abreast of new trends, techniques and developments in the field.

The Commission and the Department of Public Instruction cooperate in sponsoring and encouraging activities designed to promote formal and informal planning for cooperation among kinds of libraries and in collecting and disseminating information on library cooperation.

The Department of Public Instruction will assume responsibility for frequent communications (through newsletters and other media) with school, district, AEA and Area School media or library personnel. The State Library will assume a similar responsibility for all other libraries, but both agencies will share information to assure the widest possible distribution of information and to avoid duplication.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Public library boards, school boards and administrators should establish lines of communication to keep each other informed of changes in policy with which they are mutually concerned.

There should be provision for remedial action whenever a conflict in interest arises between the two agencies.

B. School and public librarians or media specialists should work together to formulate an overall community wide program of library development and to consider mutual problems such as:

1. Definition of respective responsibilities for materials, equipment and services to answer curriculum and individual requests.

2. Responsibility for teaching and implementing library or media center skills.

3. Determination of the most effective scheduling of hours open.

4. Education to insure proper library or media center conduct.

5. Cooperative planning for interlibrary loan, networking and other interlibrary programming.

C. School and public libraries, each having unique missions and responsibliities, should generally be financed and administered separately.

1. The local school administration is responsible for school library media centers in relation to the community's entire educational effort.

2. The public library board is responsible for public library service designed to meet the needs of the entire community.

3. Experience has shown that joint financing and operation have not been successful in meeting the needs of either students or adults.

4. Administrative, budgeting, and even political difficulties can be avoided by separate operation.

D. School media centers and public libraries generally should be housed in separate buildings.

1. The public library should be located in or near a center of population with adequate parking in that area.

2. School media centers or libraries, which must of necessity be in or near the building they serve, should be located where they will be most accessible to students, teachers and administrators.

3. The informal public library atmosphere is more conducive to adult reading and study than the more active learning laboratory atmosphere of the school library or media center.

4. In joint libraries, the training of the staff, budget allocations, collection, demands for service, and the service given usually is dominated by the needs of one group with a corresponding loss to the other.

E. Public library bookmobile service should not be considered as a substitute for centralized school media service.

1. Such a program should be planned to introduce people of all ages to public library services.

2. It should be developed or continued in areas where there is no library service only if careful study and evaluation demonstrate that it will not inhibit the growth of adequate school library programs.

F. Frequent classroom visits to the public library should not be considered as a substitute for centralized school media service.

1. Such visits should be intended to acquaint the student with the personnel, collection and organization of the public library.

2. They should emphasize the public library's role as a source of a wide range of materials.

G. School media centers and public libraries should devise ways, separately and collectively, to keep the entire community informed of their goals and needs.

H. Joint school and public libraries (combined programs and facilities) are not recommended. However, if such facilities seem necessary, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. Advanced planning, involving all concerned parties is imperative. Both physical and psychological barriers must be surmounted.

2. Space must be sufficient to serve all publics, preschool children, students, faculty, senior citizens and others. Separate and outside entrances, access for the handicapped, restrooms, and meeting rooms (for both public and school patrons) are necessary.

3. Staff must be adequately trained, committed to the philosophy and thoroughly oriented. If there is not multiple professional staff with school staff certificated and endorsed as teacher(s) and school library media specialist(s) and public library staff meeting State Library Commission guidelines, the single professional should meet the criteria for both types of library service. Continuing formal meetings between staff and between boards are needed. There should be a written contract specifying responsibilities for staff, hiring, paying, discharging, and for circulation and other procedures.

4. Funding shuld be sufficient to maintain or increase services to each public. The contract should specify which agency pays for what. Planners should keep in mind that joint facilities rarely save money and frequently cost more.

5. Collection development should be based on a written selection policy and rules statement adopted by both boards.

6. Continuous evaluation of program and services should be part of the contract. It is usual for one partner to gain and the other to lose. This is often because there is superficial satisfaction based on insufficient concern with or knowledge of what could or should be provided to patrons.

   If a community and a school are willing to provide at least as much space as for two good separate facilities with at least as much privacy and access for both groups of patrons; if the community and the school are willing to supply at least as much staff, with at least the same qualifications as would be needed for good separate programs; if the community and the school are willing to provide at least the kind, quality, and quantity of materials as would be needed for separate facilities, and at least the amount of funding needed for good separate programs, and if a school and a community will build in ample time for planning and communication, and seek staff committed to this style of service, then such a community and school might develop a joint library that would be an improvement on separate programs and services.

III. CONCLUSION: Everyone Needs Three Libraries*

Everyone needs at least three libraries - a personal library, a professional library, and a "public library." These libraries may contain some of the same materials but none can replace the need for the others.

Everyone needs a personal library. It may consist of nothing more than a television set, a radio, a telephone directory and a copy of the Bible, but it is needed for personal use on demand. The need cannot be handled easily by borrowing, nor is it convenient to lend such materials. In addition to the immediacy of need of the "primary user" personal libraries have inefficient circulation and control systems resulting in high loss of loaned materials.

Everyone needs a professional library. It may consist of nothing more than an automobile parts book but it is needed for one's profession too frequently and on too short notice to be shared easily. Extensive outside lending from such a collection is even more difficult since the demands of a profession can seldom wait. Checkout and control system for outside use also tend to be inefficient. For the student and school teacher the professional library is the school library media center.

Everyone needs at least one "public library" - a library that can supplement or "back-up", one's personal and professional libraries. It may provide different versions of the Bible for the occasional study of a Sunday School teacher, or an automobile parts book for a weekend mechanic. In other words, many of the same materials and services available in personal and professional libraries would be available here, but to supplement these personal and professional libraries - "public libraries" cannot replace them.

For most people this "public library" may be just that - the local public library - but with increasing frequency back-up library services come in many guises and much of the back-up service is provided through "professional" and "public" libraries. The school library media center may turn to the district or Area Education Agency Media Center (AEAMC) for additional materials and production services, to the district, the AEA, or the State Department of Public Instruction for consultative services, to CNIR for audiovisual inservice materials for school teachers and administrators, and to the INFORMS network for computer assisted reference service for teachers and administrators.

The public libraries themselves are part of a network including the Regional Library System, the State Library, and ILITE, the state interlibrary loan network stretching throughout the state and beyond state boundaries.

These three necessary libraries may cooperate and may offer interlibrary loan services to strenghen and support each other but none can really replace the need for the others.

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*Various versions of this statement, all written by Betty Jo Buckingham, have appeared as an article in Iowa Association of School Librarians, Library Lines, March 1972, and have been distributed as leaflets at the University of Iowa, School of Library Science, Workshop on "Public Library/School Library Cooperation", March 10, 1978 and at the joint Iowa Library Association/Iowa Educational Media Association Conference, October 17-19, 1980.

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APPENDIX

As an outgrowth of the Iowa Governor's Pre-White House Conference on Library and Information Services, March 27-29, 1979, the White House Conference on Library and Information Services November 15-18, 1979 and a national workshop on cooperation between school media centers and public libraries September 18-21, considerable attention has been given to strengthening cooperation in the state. The State Library Commission and the State Department of Public Instruction sponsored a state version of the cooperation workshop August 6-8, 1980 and hope for a second such workshop in 1981. Participants in both national and state workshops have been encouraged to seek adoption by boards and agencies of resolutions representing their commitment to the concept of cooperation. The State Library Commission has adopted the following:

INTERLIBRARY COOPERATION RESOLUTION

Whereas, there now exists in the State, agencies which provide services that support instruction, such as the local systems, the Regional Library System, the Area Education Agencies, the State Department of Public Instruction, the State Library, and the Iowa Public Broadcasting Network; and

Whereas, these agencies function on a local, regional, multi-regional, or state-wide basis; and

Whereas, there may exist duplication of effort by these agencies in providing services with an apparent potential for the compounding of that duplication of effort; and

Whereas, the level of the state's commitment of funds to support these agencies may not necessarily be related to the cost effectiveness of each agency in providing instructional support; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the State Library Commission of Iowa encourages and endorses the promotion of cooperative efforts between local, regional, state, public and educational libraries for the purpose of providing expanded and improved services to their patrons.

Be it further resolved, that the State Library Commission establish a task force, to include representatives of the above agencies, for the purpose of thoroughly studying and attempting to define roles and functions of these various agencies in the present and in the State's long range plan; and, to make recommendations for the logistic and financial support for the most cost effective and efficient coordination of such services to the Commission.

Marie H. Wallinga
Signed Chairperson
State Library Commission

September 25, 1979
Date

4' round tables are esthetically pleasing, but provide less usable working surface.
Trapezoidal tables lend themselves to grouping.

Shelving

All shelving for materials or software adjustable
Depth and height of shelves should vary according to use, and to size of patrons
Length of shelves between uprights - 3 feet

Periodical
- Narrowly spaced flat shelves
- Pamphlet boxes on shelves
- Microfilm or microfiche cabinets

Book
- Estimated capacities of 3' shelf when full
  - Hardback books of average size - 30
  - Reference books - 18
  - Picture books (including dividers) - 60
- Paperbacks
  - Racks displaying front covers encourage use and should be available to display part of collection
- Picturebooks
  - Deep, divided, "picturebook" shelves
  - Bin storage - comparable to record storage

Audiovisual materials
- Boxes, albums, notebooks or shelf inserts interfiled with printed materials
- Specialized storage by medium (specialized shelving or storage should be as flexible and open as possible to allow for adequate access and for subject classification of materials)

Audiovisual Equipment Storage

Cart for each major item, with extension cord. Storage area should be provided for all circulating equipment and carts not currently assigned to classrooms.
Deep (about 18") shelves capable of being adjusted when empty, or large storage cabinets. Some schools may wish to consider locked storage for such equipment.

Audiovisual Production Equipment and Furniture

Professional or clerical desks--these may need deep, full suspension drawer with trays for filing 5" x 3" cards

Counter, work table with storage, and shelving to facilitate all processing, production and repairing to be done in a particular building.

SOURCES

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3rd Edition
1981

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Iowa Department of Public Instruction
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

ORDER FROM
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A Yardstick for Planning School Library Media Centers

Prepared by:
Iowa Department of Public Instruction
In cooperation with:
American Association of School Librarians

SPACE

Reading-Listening-Viewing Room (RLV)

Provides for browsing, study, individual listening and viewing, storytelling, reference, current periodicals.
40 square feet per reader
A minimum of 40 study spaces
Seating for a minimum of 10% of the enrollment
No more than 80-100 seats located in one reading-listening-viewing area
Space for shelving
Shelving storage for greater of 7,500 (elementary) or 9,500 (Secondary) volumes of print and nonprint materials or 10 items per pupil plus periodicals and vertical file materials.

Student Conference Areas

Adjacent to main reading-listening-viewing room
240 square feet as a minimum, preferably with movable dividing walls. Larger schools will need more space.
Acoustically treated walls and ceiling to make area sound proof
Glass vision panels for supervision purposes not more than 30 inches from floor

Work Area

Includes processing, production, periodical and equipment storage
Opens into main reading-listening-viewing room
400 square feet as a minimum
Includes carefully planned counter with vinyl or formica top, work-type sink, kneehole spaces beneath counter and open shelves above, cupboards and storage drawers of various sizes

Office Space

A minimum of 120 square feet per professional and support employee as separate office space, or as part of work area or RLV

Multi-Purpose Storage Area

Adjoins reading room
200 square feet as a minimum

Additional Areas

Classroom: 600-750 square feet
Darkroom: 100-200 square feet
TV production area
Computer and terminal space
Professional collection space

TECHNICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Lighting

Artificial or natural lighting should meet most recent engineering society, state and energy standards.
Light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats, etc. are located where they do not use space needed for shelving.

Sound

Floors should be carpeted as the best single method of controlling sound
Adequate space between various areas should be provided to aid in the elimination of sound control problem.
Ceilings and walls should be acoustically treated

Electrical and Electronic

Electrical service should be flexible and accessible in all areas of the media center with a minimum of one duplex outlet for every 250 square feet, evenly distributed throughout the center.
Special installations: intercom, television systems, computer assisted instruction, carrels, radio, theft and detection equipment.

Access and Security

Student access to materials and equipment should be as open as possible.
Integrity of the collection may be protected by visual control
Materials such as non-print items and back issues of periodicals in closed or limited access near the charging area
Exit placement with check-out stations away from stack areas
Reserved materials at the charging area
Electronic theft detection system

ESTHETIC

Interior finishes should be carefully coordinated with both the artificial and natural lighting in each area
Color should be used to contribute to a desirable learning environment
The library media center should have warmth and genuine appeal

FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility is the key to successful library media centers
Center should be adaptable to meet the needs of a changing educational program and more sophisticated equipment
Center should allow for expansion

FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

Keys (Card Catalog, Indexes, References)

Card Catalog from a reliable furniture company, in expandable units and not tall enough to be above the average user's sightline
Index table for periodical and other indexes

Charging or Circulation Desk

A 3' x 5' or 3' x 6' charging desk is usually adequate for a small library media center. Elementary school library media centers should have sitting height charging desks.
A unit charging desk should have a card storage well, a book return unit with book truck with depressible platform and space for handling of materials. All charging desks should provide for filing of 5" high by 3" wide cards

Seating

Carrels should include a shelf, and visual barriers above eye level of average seated student.
Outlets near, but not installed in, carrels are most flexible.

Tables and chairs
Apronless 3' x 5' tables seating no more than 4 students are most flexible and functional.